GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3288
ANSWERED ON:11.12.2000
NATIONAL HIGHWAY MEET
GULAM MEHMOOD BANATWALLA

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there was any National Highway Meet in Delhi in September, 2000;

(b) if so, the main recommendations and suggestions of the said meet; and

(c) the reaction of the Government to the recommendations and suggestions made therein?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ROAD TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI, AVSM)

(a) Presumably the Hon`ble Member isreferring to the Seminar on `Financing Implementation and Operation of Highways in 21st Century organized by Indian Roads Congress and held at New Delhi from 24th to 25th September, 2000.

(b) Main recommendations and suggestions are annexed.

(c) Recommendations and suggestions of such seminars are kept in view while formulating policies and programmes of this Ministry.

ANNEXURE
STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (b) OF THE LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3288 FOR ANSWER ON 11.12.2000 BY SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA REGARDING NATIONAL HIGHWAY MEET.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

THEME-I : FINANCING OF HIGHWAY PROJECTS

1. The development of highways should be sustainable which means that only those projects which are maintainable should be taken up and provision for their maintenance ensured.

2. Financing of BOT Projects can be achieved through equity, debt, Govt. subsidy, and land rights equity could be provided by promoter, contractor and capital market; debt could be provided by financial institutions, banks, infrastructure funds or aid agencies.

3. The model concession agreement for small projects costing less than 100 crores should be used in BOT projects. The various provisions relating to entrepreneure, financial institutions, of this document should be amended as per the fee back from ongoing projects.

4. For better response to BOT projects the number of uncertainties should be reduced. In this regard detailed project report should be based on actual, reliable and material data.

5. Dedicated Road Fund outside the purview of consolidated Road Fund needs to be created.

6. Better environment and public awareness needs to be created for ensuring compliance to toll collection. The project to be taken up on BOT basis should have the support of the local people.

7. The response of entrepreneurs to BOT projects is poor. Till such time the situation improves, the BOT projects can be entrusted to Govt. Corporations.

8. The road development projects should also include social cost as far as possible. The locals residing by the side of projects should be exempted from paying toll.

9. Risks to be borne by each player in the BIOT should be well defined, and govt. should reduce the risks of the entrepreneure.

10. Possibility of Public Sector Funds leveraged for grant of equity ;contribution or other innovative methods to implement projects on BOT basis needs consideration by the Government.

11. Another problem is the non-availability of long term debt instruments with the Fis. Take over financing wherein another lender takes over financing after a certain period is an option worth attempting. This way no single FI will have to commit funds for a longer period.

12. In order to encourage private sector for taking up development of roads. The State may consider granting more fiscal concessions such as complete tax holiday for entire length of concession.

13. To increase the willingness of the user to pay the toll charges it is necessary that in BOT agreements stringent measurable performance parameters need to be evolved particularly where the traffic does not have the option of using an alternative road. In order to protect the interest of all stake holders, there may be need for development of regulatory framework.

THEME-II : IMPLEMENTATION OF HIGHWAY PROJECTS

1. There is a need for improved facilities for awareness generation about new developments. The work of project preparation must include consideration to various relevant alternatives bringing out the comparative techno-economic aspects. Choice of new materials and technologies of competing alternatives such as modified bitumen, retro-reflective road signs, geo-grids and roller compacted concrete etc. should be made on the basis of term cost rather than initial cost. Development of new materials and technologies should be a continuous process wherein their incorporation into new projects should be objectively persued. There should be progressive integration of design, construction and maintenance. The procurement procedure must undergo change to suit the requirements of special materials, products and technologies.

2. For proper implementation of projects to achieve stipulated targets it is essential to bring about institutional improvements in Govt. Departments, Contracting Industry, Equipment Industry and Consultancy Organisations.

3. It will be worthwhile to form equipment leasing companies so that better utilisation of special machinery is possible. Government may frame policy for encouraging setting up of equipment leasing companies. It may not be a financially feasible proposition for an Indian contractor to own special equipment such as could recycling machine, bitumen required for maintenance work.

4. To improve the performance of bituminous roads, a large variety of polymers and bitumen modifiers are available. The initial cost and life of mixes with these polymers and modifiers is different. While selecting the bitumen modifiers both the initial cost and life of modified mixes should be suitable considered. For assisting field engineers, a pilot field study should be undertaken for bringing out comparative performance of bitumen mixes with various polymer and modified binders.

5. There should be progressive integration of design, construction and maintenance of pavements. At the design stage the designer/consultant should enumerate the maintenance treatment expected at different years.

6. To achieve a modern road infrastructure a quantum jump in the budgetary allocation is inescapable and that for proper implementation of projects it is essential to bring about institutional improvements in the four arms of the infrastructure viz. the Govt. Departments, Contracting Industry, Equipment Industry and Consulting Organisation.

7. The highway engineering profession is currently passing through a special phase which is marked by highly accelerated investment in trunk road system and by the era of technology. The system around this profession must make adjustments so that the needs of the time can be effectively met.

8. Human Resource Development in the Government Agencies is required to order that Govt. set up becomes broad minded, taking timely decisions, change with times, not shirking in responsibility and enjoying sense of professional pride.

9. Economic, Social and Environmental factors in the assessment of road transport plans, policies and programme which should not be one time process but should be a continuous process.

10. It has increasingly been recognized that sustainable economic development depends on the rational use of environmental resources and minimizing, to the extent possible, adverse environmental impacts through improved projects selection and more responsible project planning and design. Under this strategy, development must be environmentally sound in the broadest sense.

11. Field trials should be taken up to bring out the performance of bituminous pavement consisting of DBM and Bituminous Concrete a) both the layers with 60/70 bitumen, b) DBM with 80/100 bitumen and B.C. with 60/70 bitumen. Based on laboratory studies, improvements in strength parameters of bitumen mixes with 80/100 bitumen and modified bitumen have been reported. Laboratory studies should be carried out to compare improvement in strength parameters of bitumen mixes with 60/70 bitumen and 80/100 modified bitumen.

THEME-III:OPERATION OF HIGHWAYS

1. Road safety devices such as reflectors, studs, delineators, reflectorised road markings, traffic signs, traffic signals, barricades, impact attenuators should be incorporated in all roads.

2. Many non-government organizations are involved in road safety campaign, raising resources for providing safety devices and mobilizing resources for establishment of rehabilitation centers. There is a need to recognize their contribution by way of giving them registration and Government aid.

3. NGO`s involvement can contribute to sustainability and effectiveness of road safety, projects by introducing innovating approaches and promoting community participation.

4. Intersections are the vital nodal points in any road network as the capacity of network is highly dependent on the functional efficiency o these intersections. Stimulation technique for management of mixed traffic at signalized intersections need to be used in their design. The platoon effect of traffic streams needs to be considered for better traffic management.

5. Traffic safety management during construction is a neglected area in the country now. The activities required for safety in construction zone should form part of bill of quantities.

6. Overloading of trucks damages the highway pavements besides leading to serious accidents. Checks on axle weight of loaded trucks on mobile weigh bridges be done and the errant vehicles punished. Incentives should be given to the vehicle operators for acquiring multi-axle vehicles.

7. In the detailed project report, design of pavement is given. It the pavement is to live upto end of design period, it requires maintenance which needs to be brought out at the time of initial design. The design of pavement should spell out expected maintenance requirement.

8. There is a need to draw legislation to give judiciary/quasi-judiciary powers to B.O.T. operator, if possible, or otherwise to National Highways Authority of India and similar organizations at the State level to impose traffic discipline on National/State Highways in respect of overloading, speed control, lane driving, registration of complaints against accidents etc. This will lead to unitary control over disciplining the traffic to avoid accident as well as keeping the Highway continuously opened for smooth vehicular flow.

9. Levy of toll necessitates better services and better quality of the road. During the concession period the road is required to be maintained by the entrepreneur. If there is cost overrun or delay in implementations of the project, the same can become financially unviable.

10. Wherever there are tunnels provided in the Highways, other safety measures such as smoke detectors, warning signs, close circuit fire, etc, should be made. All these have to be properly accounted for in the cost of toll operation and toll is decided on these basis.

11. The design of trucks need to be changes specially powered steering, good brake and comforts may be given to the driver so that he is not tired of long journeys.